

due to inadequate resources; one-tenth reported not eating for an entire day at least once in the last 6 months.

States are vocal about the problems created by current eligibility restrictions for immigrants. Sixteen of them provide food stamp replacement benefits with their own funds. Many others, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, have appropriated additional resources for food banks and a variety of charitable programs serving the immigrant population.

The Food Stamp Program is the foundation of our country's nutrition safety net for vulnerable people. Until 1996, eligibility was based only on a family's financial need. Many, including President Bush, now voice the opinion that the food stamp immigrant policies legislated at that time were too harsh. I congratulate the President for his advocacy and the publicity that has surrounded that. It was a high-profile advocacy.

I ask that each of us in the Senate endorse the Bush administration's food stamp policy by voting for Senator DURBIN's amendment, which the Senator has pointed out encompasses exactly the same goals. It is our opportunity, in a bipartisan way, hopefully in a unanimous way, to improve the capacity of the Food Stamp Program to operate as a genuine nutrition safety net for our country.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CANTWELL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be dispensed with.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period for morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JEAN MARIE NEAL

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I rise to invite Members and staff to join me and my staff as we celebrate and thank this evening, in the Mansfield Room, Jean Marie Neal, who has been my chief of staff for the last year, my first year in the Senate. While I understand the rules of the Senate do not allow me to acknowledge her presence in the gallery, I do want to indicate that I believe it is important to recognize the service of this wonderful woman who has spent 21 years in the service of the Congress, the majority of that in the Senate, working for Senator Dick Bryan.

It is important to note that when we have someone who is dedicated to the

Senate, to helping us achieve our goals, to be able to put forward those matters that allow us to represent our constituents and make our States and our country better places, that when that person decides to retire from their position and move on to other challenges, it is important that we recognize them and say thank you. That is what I want to make sure we are doing officially this evening in the RECORD of the Senate.

We have enjoyed in the last year the wonderful leadership of Jean Marie Neal in my office. As you know, I came from the House of Representatives and, while bringing some outstanding people with me, we had to put together a team of staff. It was under Jean Marie's leadership that we were able to find outstanding people who had been in service both in the Senate as well as in other places and who have come now to be a part of my office and my team.

As we come into our second year, we are building on a foundation and a gift that she gave me of putting together a wonderful team that is committed and intelligent and loyal and hard working. We in our office are going to miss her greatly, and we are very grateful for all of her hard work.

I know her previous employers, Senator Bryan and Congressman JOHN SPRATT, and all of those who have come in contact and have benefited from Jean Marie's intelligence and hard work and loyalty and ability to see and create a vision in terms of the office, as well as issues and advocacy for our States, are really happy for her.

Again, I invite anyone who is within earshot to come by until 7 o'clock this evening and join us to have an opportunity to celebrate Jean Marie's service to the Senate and to thank her for that and to wish her well as she moves on to, I am sure, many more successes.

AMERICA'S UNINSURED

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Madam President, I come to the floor once again to talk about the uninsured in America. I think it is important that, as we sink our teeth into this year's budget, we remember the men, women, and children who live, work, and go to school every day without health insurance, knowing that any illness could threaten their livelihood and even their lives.

I have spent a great deal of time in recent months learning about the uninsured—who they are, why they have no health coverage, the effects on individuals and their families, and what can be done to resolve this crisis.

This year, the president's budget contains \$89 billion to help the uninsured. This is no small number, to be sure, and it demonstrates the president's commitment to providing health coverage for all Americans; however, this proposal is only projected to provide coverage for up to six million of the forty million uninsured—leaving thirty-four million men, women, and children without health insurance. There-

fore, I see the president's proposal as a starting point from which to make insurance both more accessible and more affordable for all working families.

Yesterday I pressed Office of Management and Budget Director Daniels to explain how the uninsured would fare under the president's new budget proposal. I also met with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Tom Scully to urge him to assist in improving upon President Bush's proposal to provide health coverage to more low-income Americans.

In my visits to community health centers across Oregon, it has become clear to me that the uninsured—working mothers, fathers, children, single adults, students—are not interested in budget battles that may prevent action on this important matter. What Americans need is access to high quality, affordable health insurance. There are a lot of good ideas out there to help the uninsured, but no single proposal is going to help or please everybody. We need to take the best these plans have to offer and come up with a comprehensive solution as soon as possible.

There has never been a better, or more important, time to act with respect to the uninsured. I understand the demands on our treasury are great as we fight the war on terrorism both at home and abroad; however, the demands on our health care system are also increasing. With a recession and rapidly rising health care costs, more and more Americans will find themselves without health insurance. This is no time to ignore them. I look forward to working with my colleagues and the Administration to find a way to make room for as many of them as we can in this year's budget, as we work toward a day when every American has access to high quality health care coverage.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I submit for the RECORD an article that ran in The Washington Post yesterday about the discrimination that individuals with a history of mental illness face in our current health insurance market. The story documents the dilemma of Michelle Witte who was denied health insurance coverage because she was successfully treated for depression during her adolescence. In fact, more than 50 million Americans each year suffer from mental illness. About 19 percent of the Nation's adults and 21 percent of the youths aged 9 to 17 have a mental disorder at some time during a one-year period.

Last Congress I introduced legislation to address the barriers faced by Michelle Witte and thousands like her who have been treated for a mental condition. I plan to reintroduce this legislation this spring, and I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort.

The Mental Health Patients' Rights Act limits the ability of health plans